

# What's Happening in Hawai'i?

More than **1 of 10**



&  
More than **1 of 20**



Report misusing opioids



Locally and nationally, increases in opioid use and misuse have raised concerns among parents, educators, coaches, and others. Opioids have valid medical uses, but improper usage can lead to major side effects.

We have the opportunity to prevent issues like addiction, overdose, HIV, hepatitis, and more. Talking with youth without judgment or expectations leads to more meaningful and open discussions.

## Let's talk story

Middle and high school students recognize that they have adults that they can talk to.

**7 of 10**



Had an adult outside of school they could talk to about things that were important to them.

More than **HALF**



Had at least one teacher or other adult in their school they could talk to if they had a problem.

**4 of 10**



Had a parent or another adult in their family talk with them about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, or drug use in the past 12 months.



## What are opioids?

Opioids are a type of drug mostly used to reduce pain, including chronic headaches, backaches, post-surgery, or other injury.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT OPIOIDS



## Prescription opioids

are effective for managing pain. They also may have serious risks and side effects if misused, including anxiety, depression, addiction, and overdose. Common ones include oxycodone (e.g., OxyContin), hydrocodone (e.g., Vicodin), morphine, methadone, codeine, and fentanyl.

There are two main kinds of opioids...

## Illegal opioids

include heroin and diverted fentanyl, which have increased in use across the U.S. among most age groups. Continued use can lead to addiction, overdose, and increased risks for HIV and hepatitis B and C. Traces of fentanyl have been found in other substances, so opioid overdose can occur if people use other drugs.



## LISTEN FIRST, TALK AFTER.

Creating a safe space to talk about drugs and other substances, without judgment, is important for healthy outcomes. Although it may be hard to do so, avoid language and conversations that focus on "just say no." Taking time to explore life contexts and underlying reasons for substance use may lead to more long-lasting and healthy choices.

### SOME TIPS ON TALKING!

#### Talk story often

Chat about routine matters in an open way to help talk about more serious matters later.



#### Be realistic and honest

Be honest about opinions versus facts, and you will be viewed as a reliable resource. Acknowledging substance use without judgment helps to encourage trust-building.



#### Show, not tell

Share and use stories and experiences (rather than "lessons") to explore ideas and attitudes around drug and substance use.



#### Be consistent

Model the type of communication you would like to see. For example, show that you are paying attention by removing distractions such as phones/computer. Set and keep boundaries and expectations.



#### Reduce harm

If substance use is happening, suggest abstinence as just one of many choices for moving forward. For example, referral to counseling or support groups may be more effective at first.



#### Offer options

Talk with youth about pain treatment and management options (e.g., acupuncture, meditation, counseling) and refer them to an expert.



## What Can I Do and Where Can I Find Out More?



- **Safety First: A Reality-Based Approach to Teens and Drugs**  
[drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA\\_SafetyFirst\\_2014\\_0.pdf](http://drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DPA_SafetyFirst_2014_0.pdf)
- **Substance Use Prevention: A Resource Guide for School Staff**  
[whitehouse.gov/ondcp/additional-links-resources/resource-guide-for-school-staff/](http://whitehouse.gov/ondcp/additional-links-resources/resource-guide-for-school-staff/)
- **Coalition For a Drug-Free Hawai'i** [drugfreehawaii.org](http://drugfreehawaii.org)
- **Hawai'i Prevention Resource Center** [hiprc808.org](http://hiprc808.org), phone 808-545-3228 ext. 34
- **The Hawai'i Opioid Initiative** [hawaiiopioid.org](http://hawaiiopioid.org)
- **RMC Health Education Skills Models** [rmc.org/health-education-skills-models/](http://rmc.org/health-education-skills-models/)



CURRICULUM RESEARCH  
& DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA

For more information please contact The Department of Health at 808-586-4488 | <http://health.hawaii.gov/school-health>

Suggested citation: Hawai'i School Health Survey Workgroup. (2019). *Let's talk about opioids*. Honolulu: Hawai'i State Department of Health, University of Hawai'i, & Hawai'i State Department of Education.